AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) A focusing status detecting apparatus which detects a focusing status of a taking lens with respect to ~~an~~ a two-dimensional image pickup device for image-output of a camera that obtains an image to be outputted, the focusing status detecting apparatus determining that the focusing status is one of front focus, rear focus, and in focus, the focusing status detecting apparatus comprising:

a plurality of two-dimensional image pickup devices for detecting the focusing status which detect the focusing status, the plurality of image pickup devices receiving subject light incident through the taking lens with different optical path lengths, a focusing evaluation value being obtained according to a high frequency component of each of images obtained by the plurality of image pickup devices for detecting the focusing status, the focusing status being determined according to the obtained focusing evaluation value,

wherein a number of pixels of the plurality of image pickup devices for detecting the focusing status is smaller than a number of pixels of the image pickup device for image-output, and wherein of the digital signals of the images obtained by the image pickup devices for detecting focusing status only digital signals corresponding to pixels within a predetermined focus area are extracted, so that the focusing status is detected within a frame ~~range~~ of the image smaller than the entire frame ~~range~~ of the image to be outputted obtained by the image pickup device for image-output.

2. (Currently amended) A focusing status detecting apparatus which detects a focusing status of a taking lens with respect to ~~an~~ a two-dimensional image pickup device for image-output of a camera that obtains an image to be outputted, the focusing status detecting apparatus determining that the focusing status is one of front focus, rear focus, and in focus, the focusing status detecting apparatus comprising:

a plurality of two dimensional image pickup devices for detecting the focusing status which detect the focusing status, the plurality of image pickup devices receiving subject light incident through the taking lens with different optical path lengths, a focusing evaluation value being obtained according to a high frequency component of each of images obtained by the

plurality of image pickup devices for detecting the focusing status, the focusing status being determined according to the obtained focusing evaluation value,

wherein an image pickup size of the plurality of image pickup devices for detecting the focusing status is smaller than an image pickup size of the image pickup device for image-output, and wherein of the digital signals of the images obtained by the image pickup devices for detecting focusing status only digital signals corresponding to pixels within a predetermined focus area are extracted, so that the focusing status is detected within a frame ~~range~~ of the image smaller than the entire frame ~~range~~ of the image to be outputted obtained by the image pickup device for image-output.

3. (Previously presented) The focusing status detecting apparatus of claim 1 wherein said image pickup devices for detecting focusing status detect a frame.

4. (Previously presented) The focusing status detecting apparatus of claim 3 wherein said predetermined focus area comprises a central portion of said frame.

5. (Previously presented) The focusing status detecting apparatus of claim 2 wherein said image pickup devices for detecting focusing status detect a frame.

6. (Previously presented) The focusing status detecting apparatus of claim 5 wherein said predetermined focus area comprises a central portion of said frame.

7. (Currently amended) A focusing status detecting apparatus which detects a focusing status of a taking lens with respect to a first image pickup device for image-output of a camera that obtains an image to be outputted, the focusing status detecting apparatus adapted to determine whether the focusing status is front focus, rear focus, or in focus, the focusing status detecting apparatus comprising:

a plurality of second image pickup devices for detecting the focusing status by detecting a two-dimensional image, the plurality of second image pickup devices receiving light incident

through the taking lens with different optical path lengths, a focusing evaluation value being obtained according to a high frequency component of each of images obtained by the plurality of first image pickup devices, the focusing status being determined according to the obtained focusing evaluation value,

wherein a number of pixels of the plurality of second image pickup devices is smaller than a number of pixels of the first image pickup device, and the focusing status is detected within a frame ~~range~~ of the image smaller than the entire frame ~~range~~ of the image to be outputted obtained by the first image pickup device.

8. (Previously presented) The focusing status detecting apparatus of claim 7 wherein focusing status is detected using digital signals from fewer than all pixels of the plurality of second image pickup devices.

9. (Previously presented) The focusing status detecting apparatus of claim 7 wherein focusing status is detected using digital signals from pixels in a predetermined focus area of the plurality of second image pickup devices.

10. (Previously presented) The focusing status detecting apparatus of claim 9 wherein said predetermined focus area comprises a central area of a frame.